

HB 1799-S.E - DIGEST

(AS OF HOUSE 2ND READING 3/15/05)

Finds that law enforcement functions at state parks and lands are insufficient to adequately protect the public and our natural resources. Threats to the safety of the visiting public and public lands are not necessarily confined to the boundaries of state parks and lands. State law does not expressly grant or deny park rangers the authority to engage in law enforcement activities outside of park and land boundaries.

Finds that, in many areas of the state, other state or local law enforcement officers are either too far away or understaffed to provide adequate support to on-site law enforcement professionals in emergency situations.

Finds that a comprehensive review of the role and responsibilities of law enforcement professionals within and around state parks and lands is necessary to ensure the value of state parks and natural resources is not diminished.

Creates the task force on state public recreational lands and public safety.

Requires the task force to conduct a comprehensive review of law enforcement issues in and around state parks and lands, including but not limited to: (1) The extent to which illegal activity in and around state parks and lands threatens public safety and natural resources; and

(2) The ability of the current state and local law enforcement to respond to illegal activity on or near public recreational lands.

Provides that, by December 15, 2005, the task force shall provide a final report of its recommendations, including any draft legislation to implement the recommendations. The report shall be submitted to the chief clerk of the house of representatives and the secretary of the senate.